

Application No.: 09/826,267

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**AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS**

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

**Listing of Claims:**

1-16. (canceled).

17. (currently amended) A method for preparing an implantable prosthesis for loading into a delivery sheath apparatus, wherein the prosthesis comprises a stent with at least one layer of biocompatible material attached thereto, comprising the steps of:

altering ~~the~~ a surface of the biocompatible layer; and

collapsing the prosthesis for loading into the delivery sheath.

18. (previously presented) A method according to claim 17, further comprising the step of inserting a grooved mandrel of appropriate diameter into the prosthesis, wherein an interference fit between the mandrel and the prosthesis is established.

19. (original) A method according to claim 18, wherein the altering step further comprises the steps of:

forming a first set of alterations in the biocompatible layer along a longitudinal axis of the prosthesis at a first axial position aligned with a first groove in the mandrel;

rotating the prosthesis axially in an incremental fashion, wherein subsequent sets of creases are created along the longitudinal axis of the prosthesis at a plurality of axial positions, each aligned with grooves in the mandrel, until the prosthesis has been rotated 360° from the first axial position; and

removing the prosthesis from the mandrel.

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20. (original) A method according to claim 17, wherein the altering step further comprises contacting the prosthesis with a pressing comb.

21. (original) A method according to claim 20, wherein the prosthesis further comprises a stent having a plurality of articulations arranged longitudinally in rows about its circumference, wherein the pressing comb has teeth spaced a distance corresponding to the distance between successive longitudinal articulations and wherein the teeth are adapted to create an alteration in the biocompatible layer between each successive longitudinal articulation.

22. (original) A method according to claim 17, wherein the altering step further comprises contacting the prosthesis with a marking wheel.

23-29. (canceled).

30. (new) A method for preparing an implantable prosthesis for intraluminal delivery, said prosthesis comprising a stent and at least one layer of biocompatible material, said stent having a wall with openings therethrough, comprising the steps of:

altering a surface of said biocompatible layer at a plurality of distinct points;  
positioned at said openings in said wall of said stent; and  
collapsing said prosthesis.

31. (new) The method according to claim 30, wherein said altering step comprises contacting said prosthesis with a pressing comb.

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32. (new) The method according to claim 31, wherein said stent comprises a plurality of articulations arranged longitudinally in rows about its circumference, wherein said pressing comb has teeth spaced a distance corresponding to the distance between successive longitudinal articulations and wherein said teeth are adapted to create an alteration in said biocompatible layer between each successive longitudinal articulation.

33. (new) The method according to claim 30, wherein said altering step comprises contacting said prosthesis with a marking wheel.

34. (new) A method for preparing an implantable prosthesis for intraluminal delivery, said prosthesis comprising a stent having a wall with openings therethrough, a first layer of biocompatible material at least partially covering a luminal surface of said stent, and a second layer of biocompatible material at least partially covering an abluminal surface of said stent, comprising the steps of:

altering an outer surface of said second layer of biocompatible material at a plurality of distinct points positioned at said openings in said wall of said stent; and collapsing said prosthesis.

35. (new) The method according to claim 34, wherein said altering step comprises contacting said second layer of biocompatible material with a pressing comb.

36. (new) The method according to claim 35, wherein said stent comprises a plurality of articulations arranged longitudinally in rows about its circumference, wherein said pressing comb has teeth spaced a distance corresponding to the distance between successive longitudinal articulations and wherein said teeth are adapted to create an alteration in said second layer of biocompatible material between each successive longitudinal articulation.

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37. (new) The method according to claim 34, wherein said altering step comprises contacting said second layer of biocompatible material with a marking wheel.

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